



April 1, 2022

RE: HF 4441 (Masin) – Medical Exception to Open Meeting Law

Dear House State Government Finance and Elections Committee Members,

The League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota School Boards Association, Minnesota Association of Townships, Association of Minnesota Counties, and Minnesota Inter-County Association support HF 4441, which would allow a medical exception to the Open Meeting Law on a more permanent basis.

Why this bill is needed. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were instances when elected officials would be unable to attend meetings due to their immune-compromised nature (such as undergoing chemotherapy). Under these circumstances, these elected officials would be able to participate in meetings but shouldn't be exposing themselves to the public for health reasons.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is wrapping up, there are still times when elected officials may need to quarantine if they have tested positive, or have been in direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and could similarly participate in meetings but shouldn't be in public.

Transparency and open government still maintained. If an elected official participates under the medical exception, the current law provides safeguards to ensure transparency. All members of the governing body – along with the public – must be able to hear and see discussion, testimony, and votes, and voting must be done by roll call. What we learned in the last few years is that transparency can still be maintained with this interactive technology exception.

Accordingly, we ask for your support of HF 4441.

Sincerely,

Irene Kao
League of Minnesota Cities

Jeff Krueger
Minnesota Association of Townships

Denise Dittrich
Minnesota School Boards Association

Matt Hilgart
Association of Minnesota Counties

Matt Massman
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